

## **ENGINEMEN REAP BENEFITS OF MENTORING**

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**GREAT LAKES, Ill.** – At just about any point during their Navy careers, Sailors might find themselves both giving and receiving mentoring. The importance of mentorship to all Sailors, regardless of time in service or paygrade, is so high the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark recently formalized the Navy's Mentor Program. Benefiting from these changes, diesel staff from the Center for Naval Engineering (CNE) site at Training Support Center (TSC) Great Lakes, pooled resources and took the program one step further. Now Enginemen students attending A and C schools are reaping the benefits of monthly mentoring meetings, where students and instructors gather to socialize and learn from each other.

"We decided to set a date aside once a month to do something special for the students," said EN1(SW) Mark Shore, EN A School Instructor. "It's a way of letting the students know we are here to help them and answer any questions they may have in a less formal environment."

The opportunity has been well received by the students, who include both young Sailors just out of boot camp, and senior Sailors returning for advanced training after having spent time in the Fleet. For some it is a chance to ask questions about life in the Navy, what it's like underway, and to discuss career plans. For others it's a welcomed one on one opportunity to get a handle on growing up.

"This is a good place to talk if I'm having trouble at home, or a financial situation comes up," said Fireman Daniel LeVans, EN A School student. "This is my first job, the first time I've gotten paid to do something, so it does get overwhelming. But the instructors have already been in our shoes, and know what we're going through, so they offer valuable advice."

The diesel staff first discussed improvements to the mentor program for students early June 2003 and soon after held an ice cream social on July 30. At any one time the 44 A and C School instructors can have 80 to 100 students on deck, so dedicating time to everyone, plus managing

their teaching schedules, can be difficult. With their new approach to being there for their shipmates, diesel instructors are making sure no one slips through the cracks.

“The students now understand that they can come talk to us about any Navy or personal issue,” said Shore.

As a result of their efforts, the attitudes of the students have become more positive and they gain a better understanding of what to expect out in the Fleet.

“I think one of the biggest payoffs of this program is the students see us, the staff, as more approachable,” said EN C School Core Supervisor ENC(SW) Timothy Hawkins. “A lot of times the students won’t ask questions unless they are one on one with you. Mentoring this way is much less intimidating as well, because you are not calling students into your office for a counseling session, but just having a conversation in a more relaxed environment where they feel free to talk.”

The Navy’s formalized Mentoring Program was developed by the Center for Naval Leadership, which provides resources for establishing and managing command programs, as well as tools for individual Sailors to make themselves more effective mentors. Visit the Center for Naval Leadership’s Web page on Navy Knowledge Online at [www.nko.navy.mil](http://www.nko.navy.mil) for more.